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TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

All media led with events and statements related to Tuesday's intensive shelling of Israeli targets in the Gaza Strip and the western Negev. Three workers (two Palestinians and a Chinese citizen) were killed by a Qassam rocket in the Gaza Strip settlement of Ganei-Tal. Five other Palestinian workmen were injured. All media (banners in Maariv and Jerusalem Post) quoted IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz as saying that Israel's patience is waning. The media also quoted him as saying: "I suggest we not behave like terrorists." For their part, Ha'aretz and Yediot highlighted statements by IDF officials, according to which Israel will refrain from responding to the rocket and mortar attacks, saying that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas needs to be given some time to restore calm in the Gaza Strip.

Israel Radio reported that PM Sharon will convene a ministerial committee today to discuss the issue of disengagement.

Leading media quoted visiting British FM Jack Straw as saying that the UK will establish contacts with Hamas if the group puts an end to violence and recognizes Israel. The media quoted him as saying that British Foreign Office representatives met twice with Hamas members.

Ha'aretz quoted a GOI source in Jerusalem as saying that Palestinian officials deliberately created a crisis when they refused to accept a dossier containing major maps about Israeli infrastructure in the Gaza Strip at a joint coordination meeting Monday. The Palestinians claimed that the information on offer was insufficient.

Ha'aretz reported that the U.S. administration has asked the GOI to reduce the authority of the Defense Ministry to authorize Israeli security exports to countries Washington deems "problematic."

Yediot quoted a senior PA official who is in charge of the water and sewage infrastructure in the Gaza Strip as saying several days ago, at a meeting with U.S. officials and Israeli Foreign Ministry officials, that the PA is examining the possibility of moving half a million Palestinians from Gaza to the West Bank. The newspaper reported that the senior official told the Americans that the PA is requesting that the U.S. assist it in implementing the idea; the Americans reportedly did not respond, while Israeli political sources said that this is the first time the Palestinians have raised such an idea.

Ha'aretz reported that the leaders of the Geneva Initiative accused Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz of preventing, for political reasons, the convening in Jericho on June 9 of members of the movement -- including Interior Minister Ophir Pines-Paz, Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei, and the initiative's founders Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo. The newspaper cited a response by the defense establishment that Israelis are not allowed to enter PA-controlled areas.

Yediot quoted Kurdish-Iraqi leader Massud Barzani as

saying in an interview published today in the London-based Al-Hayat that having links with Israel does not constitute a crime.

Jerusalem Post reported that the U.S. Justice Department is opening the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism, which will be aimed at intensifying the effort to capture and prosecute Palestinian terrorists who have killed Americans abroad. The opening of the office, announced last month by U.S. Attorney-General Alberto Gonzales, was mandated by the passage last December of the Koby Mandell Act, named for the 13-year-old Israeli-American boy who was killed along with a friend while spelunking in the West Bank in 2001.

Yediot, Maariv and Jerusalem Post cited a comprehensive survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League in 12 EU countries:

-43 percent of polled Europeans believe that Jews are more faithful to Israel than to their own country.

Mideast:

Summary:

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Were Israel to go deep into the Gaza Strip, it would not necessarily stop the Qassam attacks ... but it would most likely cause the collapse of what is left of the PA's hold there."

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Just as the PA, the Americans, the Europeans, and Egypt still have an interest in calm -- Hamas too has an interest. And as long as this interest exists, Israel will take care not to make a move that could shut off the oxygen."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Both the Bush administration and Hamas members seem to understand that winning elections does not by itself legitimize those who continue to support terrorism."

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe ironically editorialized: "[Extremist Islamic] groups have certain demands, and a superpower like the United States can certainly agree to them."

Arab affairs correspondent Jackie Hoogie wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "The media elite in the Arab world is normalizing relations with Israel over the heads of the conservative governments. The Saudi royal family, which is accused of encouraging the Osama bin Laden brand of fundamentalism, is gradually introducing different thinking into the consciousness of the Arab masses."

Block Quotes:

I. "Restraint -- For Now"

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (June 8): "The tension in the Gaza Strip rises every two weeks or so, and then seems to subside. This is probably what will happen again this time. Basically all sides have an interest in keeping the relative quiet. Despite its threats, Hamas is very much in favor of disengagement and does not want to be accused by the Palestinian public of torpedoing the pullout. Israel, for its part, needs the PA as a partner, albeit a very limited one, for coordinating the withdrawal. And disengagement is still the top item on the Israeli agenda. Were Israel to go deep into the Gaza Strip, it would not necessarily stop the Qassam attacks (previous campaigns did not), but it would most likely cause the collapse of what is left of the PA's hold there."

II. "Walking on Tiptoe"

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (June 8): "The real motive for the fire [from the Gaza Strip on Tuesday] -- which the Palestinians are not even denying -- is the PA's decision to postpone the parliamentary elections.... For [Hamas], opening fire is the way to obtain better payment from the PA in return for agreeing to postpone elections. The fire enables Hamas to portray the Palestinian Authority in a ridiculous light and to make Abu Mazen and his security

services look helpless. If Abu Mazen wants the fire to stop, let him pay. And the price could be, for example, turning over to Hamas property that Israel will evacuate, or increasing its future share in the government and the like.... Israeli officials take comfort in two facts. First: fire of this sort does not usually last for long. Second: the convergence of interests, which is the oxygen tank of the expiring 'tahdiya,' still exists. Just as the PA, the Americans, the Europeans, and Egypt still have an interest in calm -- Hamas too has an interest. And as long as this interest exists, Israel will take care not to make a move that could shut off the oxygen."

III. "Don't Talk to Hamas"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (June 8): "Nowhere is it written that democratization must be dumb.... Both the Bush administration and Hamas members seem to understand that winning elections does not by itself legitimize those who continue to support terrorism. Israel should not undermine this understanding even with 'practical' cooperation that lets Hamas keep its arms and its radical positions, and deliver for its constituency with Israel's help. From the U.S. perspective, continuing to shun Hamas makes even more sense. First, any contact with the U.S. is necessarily of a political nature. Second, the Bush administration rightly decided that, in Yasser Arafat's case, being 'elected' was not enough to warrant contact.... Before terrorists can even claim to be reformed, they must first disarm and disavow terrorism -- something Hamas and the myriad Palestinian militias, including those aligned with Fatah, are far from doing. Only then should democracies begin to treat them as legitimate players on the democratic field."

IV. "Negotiations With Al Qaida Too"

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe ironically editorialized (June 8): "The news agencies report that U.S. administration officials are seriously considering holding negotiations with Hamas. This is because of the political success of the terrorist organization in the local elections in the Palestinian Authority. They should also consider negotiations with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Chechen independence movement, and -- not as a last option -- with al Qaida. These groups have certain demands, and a superpower like the United States can certainly agree to them.... At long last people in the United States are beginning to come to their senses. Instead of dealing with the so-called moderates, it is better to begin talks with the extremists, to find out what they want --- for they are not committing terrorism just for the hell of it. Behind their conduct there is a reasoned ideology and it is only fair that the U.S. should take it into account, and it is a pity that it did not do so before going to war in Afghanistan. Why should the United States not make some small concession to Islam, which is trying to expand its influence?.... The U.S. ought to learn from Israel, which is giving territory to the Palestinians and getting nothing in return, in the belief that this will bring a better future.... Terrorism in the western world is emasculated and barren, and with the influence of the sick, worldwide left wing it will win in any case, so why not begin talks with the terrorists today?"

IV. "The Double Arab World"

Arab affairs correspondent Jackie Hoogie wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (June 8): "Two ostensibly unrelated events took place last week. Outgoing chief of staff Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon gave an interview, the first of its kind, to a popular Arab newspaper. That evening, the chair of Egyptian satirist Ali Salem remained empty, after he was invited to receive an honorary doctorate at Ben-Gurion University. The Egyptian authorities refused to permit him to travel to Israel. The two events happened on the same day, both represent the convoluted relations between Israel and its neighbors.... The Egyptian course of action in the Ali Salem affair represents the world of yesterday. The bold interview with Bugi [Ya'alon] is an expression of the world of tomorrow. The media elite in the Arab world is normalizing relations with Israel over the heads of the conservative governments. What is even more surprising is the venue: Asharq al-Awsat, a leading Arab daily, which is published in London by a Saudi publisher. Behind him stands Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, the governor of Riyadh and the brother of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. The interview with Bugi is not the only case. The Al-Arabiya station, a leading news channel owned by a Saudi investor associated with the royal palace, has made interviews with senior

members of the IDF General Staff part of its reporting routine. The channel, which operates outside of Saudi Arabia for good reason, frequently promotes issues related to women's status, democratization and an open economy in the Arab world. There is a clear attempt here to stage a revolution through the back door. The Saudi royal family, which is accused of encouraging the Osama bin Laden brand of fundamentalism, is gradually introducing different thinking into the consciousness of the Arab masses. Ali Salem will yet write a comedy about it."

KURTZER